

REMARKS

The Examiner has rejected Applicant's Claims 1-4, 6-17 and 20-36 in the Office Action mailed December 29, 2006. The claims stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112 as being "indefinite" for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which Applicant regards as the invention. More specifically, the Examiner finds the wording of Claims 1 and 13 to be confusing in that each of these claims contains a "wherein" clause concerning the weather barrier immediately followed by two clauses. The Examiner finds the second of the two clauses to be confusing in apparently referring back to the weather barrier, while actually describing a vent in a transverse partition which is not a part of the weather barrier itself.

In view of the Examiner's remarks, Applicant has amended independent Claims 1 and 13. Previously, Applicant's claims read as a weather barrier that was comprised of both the weather barrier ring and the vent in the transverse partition. However, Figures 4-5 and the description provided in Applicant's original Specification describe these features as follows:

"[0036]Referring to Figure 5, there is illustrated a cross-section view along a longitudinal axis of one embodiment of a box thread protector 67 with a weather barrier feature according to the present invention. The box thread protector 67, also known as a box protector 67, includes a cylindrical sidewall 69 having an external surface 71, which may or may not be threaded to match the threads at the end of a drill pipe (not shown). In some applications, the outside diameter of the cylindrical wall 69 may diminish slightly from a second end 79 toward a first end 85 to correspond with drill pipe box ends having tapered threads. The second end 79 is preferably open but may be closed to suit a particular application. The cylindrical sidewall 69 encloses a coaxial, cylindrical space within the internal surface 73. A transverse partition 75, disposed at a right angle to a longitudinal axis of the box protector 67 and intermediate the first end 85 and the second end 79, separates the first and second ends 85, 79. The transverse partition 75 also defines a vent chamber 77 near the second end 79. The vent chamber 77 is part of the space outside of the tubular good. The transverse partition 75 of the vent chamber 77 preferably includes a vent 81 that passes through the transverse partition 75 and a vent valve 83 disposed in the vent. The vent 81 permits air from a region of higher pressure to flow into a region of lower pressure while minimizing the ingress of moisture or other contaminants into the tubular good. Thus, the transverse partition

75 functions to separate the interior space of the tubular good from the space outside the tubular good."

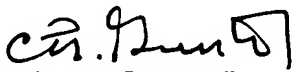
In amended independent Claims 1 and 13, the weather barrier is no longer comprised of both the weather barrier ring and the vent. Instead, the vent is claimed as part of the of the transverse partition of the polymeric body and the weather barrier ring is claimed as part of the weather barrier.

Based upon the above amendments, Claims 1-4, 6-17 and 20-25 are thought to be allowable over the art of record and an early notification of the same would be appreciated.

Since this amendment is being timely filed, no additional fee is thought to be due at this time. If any additional fee is necessitated by this amendment, please charge the same to Applicant's Deposit Account No. 50-2555 (Whitaker, Chalk, Swindle & Sawyer, LLP).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: March 7, 2007


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